

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL FLORENCE

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: REGGIO EMILIA: A LESSON IN ITALIAN CIVICS

1. IN PREPARATION FOR THE FORTHCOMING NATIONAL ELECTIONS, THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE CITY OF REGGIO, WHICH HAS BEEN DOMINATED BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY SINCE WORLD WAR 11, HAS MADE ITS CHOICES. THE PARTY HAS DECIDED THAT THE CURRENT MAYOR WILL RUN FOR THE SENATE. THE PARTY HAS FURTHER DECIDED THAT THE MAYOR WILL BE REPLACED BY THE CURRENT VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION, WHO WILL IN TURN BE REPLACED BY THE RETIRING SENATOR. FOR ONE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE ITALIAN SITUATION, IT WOULD BE HARD TO IMAGINE HOW ALL THESE CHANGES COULD BE MADE WITHOUT ELECTIONS.

2. THE MAYOR, OF COURSE, WILL HAVE TO BE ELECTED TO THE SENATE ON JUNE 20. HOWEVER, THE OTHER TWO CANDIDATES CAN BE ADVANCED BASED ON THE JUNE 1975 ELECTIONS. THE CURRENT VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION RAN IN JUNE 1975 AS HEAD OF THE LIST FOR THE PROVINCE AND AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE CITY. HE FINISHED AS SECOND OF THE NON-ELECTED FOR THE CITY COUNCIL ON THE COMMUNIST LIST. WHEN SOMEONE ON THE COUNCIL RESIGNS, THE SEAT IS FILLED BY THE NON-ELECTED, RATHER THAN THROUGH THE HOLDING OF A NEW ELECTION. THE FIRST NON-ELECTED COMMUNIST BECAME A MEMBER SHORTLY AFTER THE ELECTION WHEN ONE OF THE

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SUCCESSFUL COMMUNIST CANDIDATES GAVE UP HIS SEAT. THE

DEPARTURE OF THE MAYOR WILL LEAVE A PLACE OPEN FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PROVISIONAL ADMINISTRATION WHO WILL SUBSEQUENTLY BE ELECTED MAYOR BY THE COMMUNIST DOMINATED CITY COUNCIL.

3. THE ENTRY OF THE SENATOR INTO THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION WILL BE A BIT MORE COMPLICATED SINCE IN JUNE 1975 HE PLACED SEVENTH AMONG THE NON-ELECTED TO THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL. IT WILL BE NECESSARY THEREFORE FOR THE SIX PRECEDING NON-ELECTED COMMUNISTS ON THE LIST TO WAIVE THEIR RIGHT TO BECOME PART OF THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION. THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE DISCIPLINE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY WILL BE BROKEN.

4. TO A FOREIGN OBSERVER, SUCH A PROCEDURE SEEMS EFFICIENT BUT IS IT DEMOCRATIC?GORDON

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